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Amendments to the Claims:

Please amend Claims 10, 20, 23, 26, 29, 32, 33, 36, 39, and 40. The Claim Listing below will replace all prior versions of the claims in the application.

Claim Listing:

1. (Previously Presented) A system for reducing bandwidth consumed by gathering statistical data via a half-duplex communication bus, comprising:
a system controller gathering statistical data via a half-duplex communication bus;
at least one element in the system also on the half-duplex communication bus,
said element:
 - (i) in a controlled manner, automatically pre-gathering the statistical data to in an information buffer in the element; and
 - (ii) reporting a subset of the statistical data in the buffer to the system controller when polled a) for the statistical data or b) for some other reason; andthe automatic pre-gathering and subsequent reporting of statistical data reducing the number of communications and data transfer cycles required to transfer the statistical data from the element to the system controller resulting in a reduction of bandwidth consumed by gathering the statistical data from the element via the half-duplex communication bus.
2. (Original) The system according to Claim 1 wherein the buffer is organized in a queue and the statistical data is reported whenever the element has been polled for the statistical data or for some other reason and the statistical data has reached the head of the queue.
3. (Original) The system according to Claim 1 wherein the element is a line card having at least one processor monitoring at least one communication port.
4. (Original) The system according to Claim 1 wherein the system reports the gathered statistical data to a central statistical data gathering system.

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5. (Original) The system according to Claim 1 wherein:
the statistical data includes information about an element communication port;
and
the buffer stores only one instance of information about a communication port at any given time.
6. (Original) The system according to Claim 1 wherein the element makes statistical data regarding respective ports available at least as often as the system controller requires the statistical data.
7. (Original) The system according to Claim 1 wherein the element makes the statistical data available at least one time per second.
8. (Original) The system according to Claim 1 wherein the element makes the statistical data available as often as necessary but not so often that the buffer is congested by the statistical data.
9. (Original) The system according to Claim 1 wherein the element reports statistical data in place of reporting a null response.
10. (Currently Amended) A method for reducing bandwidth consumed by gathering statistical data on a half-duplex communication bus, comprising:
gathering statistical data from at least one element in a multiprocessor system employing the half-duplex bus;
automatically pre-gathering the statistical data in an information buffer in a controlled manner by the at least one element in the multiprocessor system; and
reporting the statistical data from the buffer to a system controller when polled by the system controller either for the statistical data or for some other reason;
the automatic pre-gathering and subsequent reporting reducing the number of communications and data transfer cycles required to transfer the statistical data from the

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element to the system controller resulting in a reduction of bandwidth consumed by gathering the statistical data about the elements via the half-duplex communication bus.

11. (Original) The method according to Claim 10 wherein the element further comprises:
 - organizing the data in the buffer in a queue; and
 - reporting the statistical data whenever the element has been polled for the statistical data or for some other reason and the statistical data has reached the head of the queue.
12. (Original) The method according to Claim 10 wherein the element is a line card having at least one processor monitoring at least one communication port in the line card.
13. (Original) The method according to Claim 10 further comprising reporting to a central statistical data gathering system the statistical data gathered from the elements.
14. (Original) The method according to Claim 10 wherein:
 - the statistical data refers to an element communication port; and
 - the buffer stores only one instance about an element communication port at any given time.
15. (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 10 wherein automatically pre-gathering statistical data is performed at least as often as the statistical data is gathered by the system controller.
16. (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 10 wherein automatically pre-gathering statistical data is performed at least one time per second.
17. (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 10 wherein automatically pre-gathering statistical data is performed as often as necessary but not so often that the buffer is congested by the statistical data.

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18. (Original) The method according to Claim 10 wherein reporting the statistical data is performed in place of reporting a null response.
19. (Previously Presented) A system for reducing the bandwidth consumed by gathering statistical data via a half-duplex communication bus, comprising:
 - means for gathering statistical data from at least one element in the system employing a half-duplex communication bus;
 - means for automatically pre-gathering the statistical data, in a controlled manner, in a buffer associated with the means for automatically pre-gathering statistical data; and
 - means for reporting the statistical data to said means for gathering the statistical data when polled either for the statistical data or for some other reason and the statistical data is selected to be reported;
 - said means for automatically pre-gathering and said means for reporting reducing the number of communications and data transfer cycles required to transfer the statistical data from the element to the means for gathering the statistical data resulting in a reduction of bandwidth consumed by gathering the statistical data about the elements via the half-duplex communication bus.
20. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for reducing the bandwidth consumed by gathering statistical data on a half-duplex communication bus, comprising:
 - at least one communication port having high-speed communication capabilities with external devices;
 - a processor coupled to the communication port, the processor maintaining statistical data about the communication port;
 - a buffer coupled to the processor, the processor automatically pre-gathering in the buffer, in a controlled manner, the statistical data; and
 - an interface transmitting the statistical data to the system controller via a half-duplex communication bus when polled either for the statistical data or for some other reason and the statistical data is selected to be reported.

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21. (Original) The apparatus according to Claim 20 wherein the statistical data in the buffer is organized in a queue.
22. (Original) The apparatus according to Claim 20 wherein the processor limits the statistical data in the buffer to one entry per port at any given time.
23. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to Claim 20 wherein the processor pre-gathers statistical data associated with a port at ~~about~~ at least the rate of being requested by the system controller.
24. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to Claim 20 wherein the processor pre-gathers data about a port as often as necessary but not so often that the buffer is congested by the statistical data.
25. (Original) The apparatus according to Claim 20 wherein the statistical data is reported in place of reporting a null.
26. (Currently Amended) In a line card having at least one communication port, a method for reducing the bandwidth consumed by gathering statistical data on a half-duplex communication bus, comprising:
 - maintaining statistical data about at least one communication port;
 - automatically pre-gathering the statistical data in a buffer;
 - transmitting the statistical data to a system controller via a half-duplex communication bus when polled either for the statistical data or for some other reason and the statistical data is selected to be reported.
27. (Original) The method according to Claim 26 wherein the statistical data in the buffer is organized in a queue.

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28. (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 26 wherein pre-gathering the statistical data in the buffer limits the number of entries per port in the buffer.
29. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim 26 wherein pre-gathering the statistical data in the buffer occurs at about at least the rate of requests for data about an individual port.
30. (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 26 wherein pre-gathering the statistical data in the buffer occurs as often as necessary but not so often that the buffer is congested by the statistical data.
31. (Original) The method according to Claim 26 wherein transmitting the statistical data occurs in place of transmitting a null response message.
32. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for reducing the bandwidth consumed by gathering statistical data on a half-duplex communication bus, comprising:
means for supporting high-speed communications with external devices;
means for pre-gathering statistical data about the means for supporting high-speed communications;
means for automatically reporting the statistical data to a requesting device via a half-duplex communication bus when polled for the statistical data or for some other reason and the statistical data is selected to be reported.
33. (Currently Amended) A computer program product, comprising:
a computer usable medium for storing data;
a set of computer program instructions embodied on the computer usable medium, including instructions to:
maintain statistical data about at least one communication port;
automatically pre-gather the statistical data in a buffer;

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transmit the statistical data to a system controller via a half-duplex communication bus when polled either for the statistical data or for some other reason and the statistical data is selected to be reported.

34. (Original) The computer program product according to Claim 33 wherein the instructions further include instructions to organize the statistical data in the buffer in a queue.
35. (Original) The computer program product according to Claim 33 wherein the instructions further include instructions to limit the statistical data in the buffer.
36. (Currently Amended) The computer program product according to Claim 33 wherein the instructions further include instructions to make the statistical data available at about at least the rate of being requested by the system controller.
37. (Original) The computer program product according to Claim 33 wherein the instructions further include instructions to make the statistical data available in the buffer as often as necessary but not so often that the buffer is congested by the statistical data.
38. (Original) The computer program product according to Claim 33 wherein the instructions further include instructions to report a subset of the statistical data in place of reporting a null.
39. (Currently Amended) A system for reducing bandwidth consumed by gathering data via a communication bus, comprising:
 - a system controller gathering data on a communication bus;
 - at least one element in the system also on the communication bus, said element:
 - (i) automatically pre-gathering the data in a buffer; and
 - (ii) reporting a subset of the data in the buffer to the system controller via a half-duplex communication bus when polled a) for the data or b) for some other reason.

40. (Currently Amended) A method for reducing bandwidth consumed by gathering data via a communication bus, comprising:
- automatically pre-gathering substantive data in a buffer;
 - when polled a) for the data or b) for some other reason, reporting the substantive data from the buffer instead of non-substantive data via a half-duplex communication bus.